

Elijah Cup

Praying for Vocations



Serra Atlanta

Supporting Vocations in the Archdiocese of Atlanta

About Serra

“Serra is the lay vocations arm of the Church.”

Pope John Paul II

An Idea That Caught On

The year was 1934; the place was Seattle, WA; and four Catholic friends had an idea. They decided to meet regularly over a meal to discuss how their Christian values could be lived out in their professional lives. Soon more friends were joining them, and within several months, they had decided on an additional focus: the encouraging of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. They chose Padre Junipero Serra, the noted Spanish missionary, as patron.

This small group has grown into Serra International. Serrans today are still dedicated to spiritual growth, continuing Catholic adult education, warm fellowship and the encouragement of vocations. It was a great idea and it has become a tradition of commitment.

Objectives

To foster and promote vocations to the Catholic priesthood and religious life, and to encourage its members to fulfill their own Christian vocation to service.

Serra Today

Serra is a voluntary organization of Catholic men and women of various ages, races and backgrounds. There are 195 clubs with more than 12,500 Serrans in 35 counties around the world. In 1986, Serra International voted to welcome women, as well as men, to membership in the organization. Women, as full-fledged members, are very important contributors to Serra.

Serra in Atlanta

Here in the Archdiocese of Atlanta there are nearly one hundred active Serrans who meet at the Season's 52 Restaurant in Sandy Springs Georgia.



Elijah & the Widow

1 Kings 17:8-15

After some time, however, the brook ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land. So the LORD said to him: "Move on to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have designated a widow there to provide for you." He left and went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." "As the LORD, your God, lives," she answered, "I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." "*Do not be afraid,*" Elijah said to her. "Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.

For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, "The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth."

She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well.

Praying For Vocations

The purpose of the Elijah Cup, a consecrated chalice, is to provide a focal point for prayer.

We are all aware of the need for vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and to the religious life. But sometimes we forget just how powerful praying for an increase in vocations can be. If we pray with the faith of the widow of Zarephath, our cup will never run dry! We will always have priests to bring us Jesus in the Eucharist.

In 1 Kings 17, during a drought, Elijah tells the poor widow of Zarephath that if she makes him a small loaf of bread with the last of her flour and oil, her "*jar of flour will not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the Lord sends rain upon the earth.*" In faith, the widow baked the bread and fed Elijah. For the next year, the widow, her son, and Elijah ate bread made from the bowl of flour and jug of oil.

The 2nd Vatican Council instructs us that it is the job of the laity to pray for and raise up vocations, and this has been echoed by Pope John Paul II in many of his teachings.

The Elijah Cup

Each week at Sunday Mass the celebrant will use the Elijah Cup as the chalice or a precious blood cup. After purifying the Elijah Cup at the end of Communion, he calls a family, individual, or couple forward to receive the Elijah Cup. They receive a blessing and take the cup home, putting it in a place of honor.

Each day for a week, during prayer time (morning, bedtime or at meals), they pray for an increase and perseverance of vocations. The following Sunday they return the Elijah Cup with the gifts of bread and wine at the Offertory.

A prayer journal also travels with the Elijah Cup. Each week the family, individual, or couple that has the cup enters a thought, prayer, or scripture verse. Over time, this diary becomes a spiritual journal for the parish.

Praying for vocations is the most powerful way to support vocations. A vocation is a call from the Holy Spirit, a gift from God that is nurtured in prayer. When we pray for vocations, we lift up to our Father those men and women who he is calling in a very special way. We hope that those who bring the cup home will continue to pray for vocations daily.



One Family's Experience

The following remarks were made at Shepherd' Night by Bruce and Carol Kapteyn and their children - Cameron, Telia, and John. The Kapteyn's are members of [St. Peter Chanel Mission](#) in Roswell, GA. The Kapteyn's were among the first to bring the Elijah Cup to there home.

Bruce Kapteyn (Father)

Thank you Archbishop, Reverend Fathers, ladies and gentlemen. We appreciate the honor of Father Frank asking us to represent the many families of the mission of St. Peter Chanel who have participated in bringing the Elijah cup into their homes each week. He asked us to relate to you what being involved with the Elijah cup has meant to us.

Before I start, I am happy to report that the response from the mission of St. Peter Chanel has been overwhelming. Three families each week bring the Elijah cup home and each night pray that more men and women might enter into religious vocations. We also prayed for seminarians and especially for all religious in the archdiocese of Atlanta who devote their lives and love to the many Catholic families in the area.

For personal reflections and experiences on how the presence of the Elijah cup in our home has impacted us, I would like to introduce our family, who will each say a few words. First to speak will be Cameron, our youngest child who is 11, then our daughter Telia, 12, our oldest son John, 14 and lastly Carol, my wife.

Cameron Kapteyn (11 yrs. Old)

Because we had the Elijah Cup we prayed for religious vocations.

At first I prayed that others would have religious vocations, and then I realized that my brother, my sister, or I might have a religious vocation. I thought vocations were for other people but we are other people.

Because of the Elijah Cup I thought about priests and sisters and how they heard God's call.

Telia Kapteyn (12 yrs. Old)

The experience with the Elijah Cup was a wonderful one for my family and I. We placed the chalice on our family table to remind us of vocations, which is what it symbolizes. I never really had thought about or pondered over exactly how much religious people really mean to us, the Catholic Church.

Without Archbishops, Bishops, priests, sisters and deacons, there could be no Catholic Church. These people influence our lives in so many ways. They live their lives as true examples of the teachings of Jesus.

From when I was 5 or 6 until now, I can remember how these special people have influenced my life; Father Becher, Father Rock, Father Bob, and now Father Frank and Sister Patricia. These individuals have each made a very big impression on my life. The Elijah cup reminds us to pray for these people who often slip by unrecognized and without the support of our prayers.

I think you should bring the Elijah Cup to your parishes.

What the Elijah Cup symbolizes is the future of the Catholic Church.

John Kapteyn (14 yrs. Old)

Having a chalice that was actually used in the celebration of mass in our home was a powerful experience for my family and I. While reciting the prayer card I had a lot of things going through my head from religious vocations to my English test. It wasn't until after we had given the cup back to the church to be passed on to the next family that I thought about the true purpose of what the cup was in our home for. While saying the prayer the idea never really crossed my mind that I or someone I was close to might go to a seminary or convent; I only thought of asking God's help for that other person.

I realize that one of the main reasons the cup was in our home was to inspire prayer for wisdom of choice; to better understand God's plan for each and every one of us.

Carol (Mother)

When Father Frank asked if we would speak about this experience of the Elijah Cup in our home, we immediately said "yes". (It's tough to turn down Father Frank).

As Catholics, we have crucifixes in our home. They remind us daily of Christ's love. The Elijah Cup in our home is a holy object, normally reserved for the use of priests or Eucharistic ministers. Therefore, my vision for the Elijah cup in our home was that, of course, it would have a place of honor in our entry or mantle and it would be enshrined there during the week. We would bring the cup into the midst of our family only for fervent prayer as we gathered around it in the evening.

The Reality was, that the cup entered our home and stayed where guests feel the most comfortable, in the kitchen, our center of family life. The symbol of Christ's life and sacrifice joined us among the ringing phone, the basketball schedules, the daily news and the piles of homework that inevitably accumulate in a busy family. Through the comings and goings of our day we were always aware of its holy presence among us, there on the kitchen counter. This was not my original vision of how it would be, but on reflection I realized that if Christ were in our home, he would have been there in the kitchen, with us, comfortably seated at the kitchen counter asking the children about their day at school. He would have told me to leave the dishes, forget the laundry, and come and listen to him. It was how he chose to live his life here on earth, with ordinary people in the midst of their everyday lives, teaching them to listen and pray.

The Elijah Cup is an extremely powerful symbol of the priesthood and religious life. Because of the uniqueness of the cup in our home it was a constant teacher and reminder of the need for prayer for religious vocations and for those who now serve us in the Church. The Elijah Cup inspired much prayer and discussion in our home. It was a wonderful experience.

Bruce Kapteyn (Father)

As you can tell, the Elijah cup's presence in our home has been a real, heart-felt blessing, certainly not a task. It has been our pleasure to participate, along with the other 25 families, who have brought the Elijah cup home over the past 2 months. We hope that others may also share what we have discovered; that the Elijah cup has raised our awareness of the need for prayer for all religious and the importance of praying for more people to enter religious life.

Our family is richer due to the Elijah cup. We will continue to pray for its intentions.

Thank you for your time this evening.... and thank you for your devotion to the Archdiocese.

Schedule of Events

Week 1

- Bulletin Announcement
- Identify Parish Coordinator

Week 2 - Sign-Up Sunday

- Bulletin Announcement
- Pulpit Announcement by Pastor
- Sign-Up

Week 3 – First Family Takes Elijah Cup Home

- First Presentation to Family
- Sign-Up Continues if Needed

Week 4

- Second Presentation to Family
- Note from Pastor in Bulletin

Week 5

- Third Presentation to Family
- Story in Parish Newsletter

Ongoing

- Presentation to Family
- Add Elijah Cup Coordinator to Parish List of Contacts/Ministers
- Place Coordinators name and phone number in the bulletin.
- List current week and next week schedule in the bulletin.

Requirements

Pastoral Support

- Parish Coordinator (named by Pastor)
- Chalice for each Mass (provided by Parish)
- Carrying Case for each Chalice (provided by Parish)
- Prayer Cards with Vocations Prayer (provided by Serra)
- Prayer Journal/Diary for Families (one diary provided by Serra)
- Sign-Up Sunday Presentation (facilitated by Serra)
- Bulletin Announcements

Sign-Up Sunday

Elijah Cup Talk

- 5 to 6 Minutes in length.
- Suggest talking after Communion.
- Key Points--
 - Thank you.
 - Brief Overview of Serra.
 - Invitation to Pray for Vocations.
 - Story of the Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath – *1 Kings 17:8-15*.
 - Importance and Power of Prayer.
 - The Responsibility of the Laity to Promote and Pray for Vocations.
 - How the Elijah Cup Works
 - Invitation to Sign-Up After Mass.
- Stress Elijah Cup is for Couples and Singles As Well As Families.

Sign-Up Table

- Located in a Prominent Place in Narthex or Outside Church.
- Display—
 - Elijah Cup (Chalice).
 - Carrying Case.
 - Prayer Journal.
 - Prayer Cards.
 - Reminder Card.
 - Parish Sign-Up Sheet.
 - Seminarian List.
 - Serra Information.

After Mass

- Be Proactive.
- Be positive.
- Encourage parishioners to sign up and participate.
- Stress no meetings or cost – Asking for prayer only.

Suggested Actions

For Mass

- Have the family, couple or individual who prayed with the Elijah Cup during the previous week present the gifts of bread and wine as well as the Elijah Cup at the Offertory.
- The celebrant should use the Elijah Cup as the chalice for consecration or as a precious blood cup during the Mass.
- After Communion, a precious blood minister should purify the Elijah Cup at the credence table, place it in its carrying case and give it to either the celebrant or an altar server.
- Just prior to the Final Blessing and the Dismissal, the celebrant calls the family, couple, or individual forward that will pray with the Elijah Cup during the upcoming week. He presents the cup (in its carrying case) to them and commissions them with a blessing to lift up the prayers for vocations of the community during the coming week.
- The family, couple, or individual returns to their seats.
- The following Sunday, the steps are repeated.

For Coordinator

- Should publish a schedule for their Mass.
- At the end of the week, remind the family with the Elijah Cup to return it at Mass on Sunday.
- Towards the end of the week, confirm that the family scheduled for the upcoming week will be at Mass.
- Add families, couple and individuals to the schedule as they express interest in participating.

Bulletin Announcements

Week Prior To Pulpit Announcement



Elijah Cup

Starting (date), our parish will start praying for vocations with the "Elijah Cup". Praying for vocations is a responsibility and privilege of the laity. The "Elijah Cup" is a chalice that will be presented to a family each Sunday at the conclusion of Mass. That family will take the "Elijah Cup" home and use it as a focal point while praying daily for an increase in religious vocations. In successive weeks, the "Elijah Cup" is passed to other families. Listen next week for more details from the pulpit.

Week Of Pulpit Announcement



Elijah Cup

Starting next week, our parish will start praying for vocations with the "Elijah Cup". Praying for vocations is a responsibility and privilege of the laity. The "Elijah Cup" is a chalice that will be presented to a family each Sunday at the conclusion of Mass. That family will take the "Elijah Cup" home and use it as a focal point while praying daily for an increase in religious vocations. In successive weeks, the "Elijah Cup" is passed to other families. Sign-up after Mass today.

Successive Weeks



Elijah Cup Schedule

Feb 20	9 am	Ted Stewart Family
	12 pm	Carol Jones
	5 pm	Jim Brandt Family
Feb 28	9 am	Wayne Murphy Family
	12 pm	George Thompson Family
	5 pm	Brian Smith

To participate in the Elijah Cup call (Coordinators Name) at (Phone Number).

Blessing

Receive the Elijah Cup. This chalice has been used for the celebration of the Holy Mass. It is a reminder to all of us for the need to pray for vocations for the priesthood, religious life, and permanent diaconate. As you place this chalice in your home, please pray for our Archbishop, the priest and religious of this Archdiocese, and for me, your unworthy servant.

Prayer Journal

A journal travels with the Elijah Cup. At the end of each week, the family, couple or individual praying for vocations makes a dated entry in the journal. The entry could be a prayer, scripture verse or thought as moved by the Spirit.

<p>Presented to (Parish) by the Serra Clubs of Atlanta</p>	<p>Bless the Church of (Parish) by raising up dedicated and generous leaders from our families and friends who will serve Your people as Priests, Deacons, Brothers, Sisters, and Lay Ministers. Inspire us to know You better and open our hearts to hear Your call.</p>
---	--

Reminder Card

<p>Elijah Cup</p> <p><i>May You Have God's Peace.</i></p> <p>Please Remember That This Is A Consecrated Chalice. Set It In A Place Of Honor In Your Home. Do Not Drink From The Cup Except At Mass.</p> <p>Serra Clubs of Atlanta www.SerraAtlanta.org</p>

Prayers For Vocations

Gracious and loving God,
help the men and women of our parish to hear the call to serve your Church.
Our needs are great and our people thirst for your presence.
Open the hearts of many,
raise up faithful servants of the Gospel,
dedicated holy priests, sisters, brothers, and deacons,
who will spend themselves for your people and their needs.
Bless those who are serving now with courage and perseverance.
Grant that many will be inspired by their example and faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God,
Who wills not the death of a sinner
but rather that he be converted and live.
Grant we beseech You,
through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin,
Saint Joseph her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra, and all the saints,
an increase in laborers for Your Church.
Fellow laborers with Christ to spend themselves for souls
through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Amen.

O God,
in the past you called men and women
to dedicate their lives to you through priesthood and religious life.
Today, stir up the grace of a religious vocation
in the hearts of many within our parish community.
Grant them the willingness and generosity
to place their lives completely in your hands
as priests, brothers and sisters.
Help me to support them
by my own fidelity to your call to holiness
through prayer and Christian service.
If you desire that one of my family or friends follow you in this way,
grant me the wisdom and insight to support and encourage that person
to listen to your voice and follow you without delay. Amen.

O loving and gracious God, Father of all,
You bless your people in every time and season
and provide for their needs through your providential care.
Your Church is continually in need of priests,
sisters and brothers to offer themselves
in the service of the gospel by lives of dedicated love.
Open the hearts of your sons and daughters
to listen to your call in their lives.

Give them the gift of understanding
to discern your invitation to serve you and your Church.
Give them the gift of courage to follow your call.
May they have the spirit of young Samuel
who found fulfillment in his life when he said to you,
"Speak Lord, for your servant is listening."
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Loving God, you call all who believe in you to grow perfect in love by following
in the footsteps of Christ your Son. Call from among us more men and women
who will serve you as priests and religious. By their way of life, may they provide
a convincing sign of your Kingdom for the Church and the whole world. We ask
this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Good and gracious God,
you have called us through Baptism
to discipleship with your Son, Jesus Christ,
and have sent us to bring the Good News
of salvation to all peoples.
We pray that you grant us more priests and religious
to build up your Church within
the Archdiocese of Atlanta.
Inspire our young men and women
by the example of our priests and religious
to give themselves totally
to the work of Christ and His Church.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen!

O Lord, help me know your will for me.
Let your light shine in the depths of my heart,
that I may know
what you want me to do with my life.
Help me believe
that you have a special plan for me.
Lord, I know I pass through this life only once;
help me decide
how you want me to make a difference.
Like our Blessed Mother,
give me the wisdom to hear your voice
and the courage to answer your call.
Above all, give me peace of mind and heart.
I offer this prayer
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer For The Perseverance Of Vocations

O God,
You have constituted Your only begotten Son supreme and eternal Priest
for the glory of Your Majesty and the salvation of mankind:
grant that those whom He has chosen ministers and dispensers of His mysteries
may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. Amen.

